

THE DAVID S. WYMAN INSTITUTE FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES SHOWED ME SOME OLD CARTOONS FROM 1939 THAT COMMENTED ON THE NOW INFAMOUS "VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED," OVER 900 JEWS FLEEING NAZI GERMANY ON THE ST. LOUIS WERE DENIED HAVEN IN THE USA AND FORCED TO RETURN TO EUROPE ON THE EVE OF WW2. SEVENTY YEARS AGO TODAY, THE LAST PASSENGERS DISEMBARKED. FEW AMERICANS PROTESTED, ONLY A TINY HANDFUL OF EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS MOURNFULLY SANG...

# THE ST. LOUIS REFUGEE SHIP BLUES

THE ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION'S REFUSAL TO LET THOSE REFUGEES IN HAS COME TO SYMBOLIZE AMERICA'S INDIFFERENCE TO THE NAZI GENOCIDE.



By art spiegelman 2009

Historical research: DR. RAFAEL MEDOFF, director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

AS A CARTOONIST-AMERICAN WHOSE PARENTS SURVIVED AUSCHWITZ, I'M PROUD THAT AT LEAST A FEW CARTOONISTS ROSE TO THE OCCASION!



MOST CARTOONISTS—LIKE MOST OTHER PEOPLE—JUST HAD A FAILURE OF MORAL IMAGINATION... OF EMPATHY.



TAKE CARTOONIST JERRY DOYLE: HE DIDN'T TOTALLY IGNORE THE 1939 ASYLUM SEEKERS... HE JUST TOTALLY TRIVIALIZED THEIR SUFFERING.



IT'S NOT LIKE HE CONDONED, SAY, TORTURE! BUT, HEY, THERE WAS A DEPRESSION GOING ON... AND MAYBE HE HAD A KID JUST GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE.

JESSE CRAGILL TRIED TO WIN SYMPATHY FOR THE JEWS BY INVOKING A PROTESTANT HYMN ABOUT TAKING SHELTER IN JESUS.

BUT AS A CARTOON TRYING TO MAKE A CLEAR POINT, IT DIDN'T QUITE—UM—CUT IT.



"Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me!"



EDMUND DUFFY BOILED IT ALL DOWN TO A MEMORABLE IMAGE (IT'S WHAT EDITORIAL CARTOONS AT THEIR BEST CAN DO!)

THE WANDERING JEW SHOWN AS SOME RISING FROM A SMOKESTACK WAS HAUNTING AND PROPHETIC.



THE WANDERING JEW

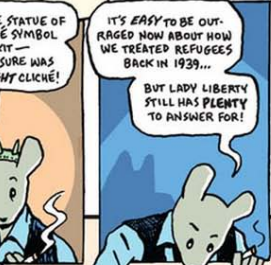


FRED PACKER DREW THE STATUE OF LIBERTY, A TIRED CLICHÉ SYMBOL IN THE CARTOON TOOLKIT—BUT IT SURE WAS THE RIGHT CLICHÉ!

IT'S EASY TO BE OUTRAGED NOW ABOUT HOW WE TREATED REFUGEES BACK IN 1939... BUT LADY LIBERTY STILL HAS PLENTY TO ANSWER FOR!



ASHAMED



"YEARNING TO BE FREE..."



I JUST READ A NEW REPORT FROM HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST ONLINE: SINCE 2003 OVER 48,000 MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE FLED TO AMERICA TO ESCAPE POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, OR ETHNIC PERSECUTION HAVE BEEN DETAINED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IN HARSH PRISON-LIKE FACILITIES FOR MONTHS, EVEN YEARS, OFTEN WITHOUT AN IMMIGRATION COURT REVIEW.

TALKING OF HIS CRAFT HERBLOCK ONCE SAID:

"THE BASIC IDEA... IS TO TRY TO SAY THE RIGHT THING."



HERBLOCK WAS OFTEN ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS AND BACK IN JUNE 1939... HE SAID THE RIGHT THING.

TRAGEDY AT SEA



THESE DRAWINGS WERE MOSTLY FUELED BY INDIGNATION, BUT THE DAYS OF PAUMIER AND THOMAS NAST ARE LONG GONE!



POLITICAL CARTOONS NOW MOSTLY OFFER BLAND, TOPICAL "LAFFS," AND EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS ARE DING OFF EVEN FASTER THAN THE NEWSPAPERS THAT HIRE THEM.



SIGH, IT'S REALLY HARD TO SAY THE RIGHT THING!

